



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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August 25, 2004



Case Control Unit
Surface Transportation Board
1925K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20423
Attention: Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball

RE: Environmental Assessment Finance Docket
New England Transrail, LLC, d/b/a Wilmington and Woburn Terminal Railroad
Co. – Construction, Acquisition and Operation Exemption – in Wilmington and
Woburn, MA

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

I am writing to add my comments concerning the possible sale of 51 Eames Street in Wilmington by Olin Chemical Corporation to New England Transrail. As the State Representative for the City of Woburn, I have been privileged with significant information on this matter that has caused me grave concern. As such, I am strongly urging that all pending actions toward the sale of the Olin Corporation site cease until the corporation has completely satisfied their environmental responsibility of removing any and all contaminants and restoring the site to its natural habitat.

The Olin site has had over sixty years of chemical contamination due to several chemical companies dumping various chemical agents into unlined lagoons. Currently, there is a plume that has threatened the Town of Wilmington's drinking water system, which has required the town to be granted permanent emergency hookup to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority water supply system. The plume is also threatening the Hall's Brook aquifer in Woburn and thus the entire Aberjona River watershed area. The further contamination of the Aberjona River watershed area will send contaminants downriver into the broader Mystic River watershed and eventually

into the Boston Harbor. This fact makes the problems at the Olin site far larger and more hazardous to the public's health and safety than they have been treated to date.

The plan proposed by New England Transrail (NET) brings to light numerous concerns as to the future of the Olin site. Once the property has been sufficiently cleaned according to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, it can not be simply sold to anyone who is willing to buy it. NET is looking to use the Olin site as a regional rail and truck transfer station. In its application, NET stated that it intended to transport "chemical products (non-hazardous; non-explosive), construction debris, contaminated soils, liquids (non-hazardous; non-explosive), non-hazardous waste, propane, road salt..." Also the report states that the transportation of hazardous material is "not expected ... at the re-load site." Any transportation of materials would need to be closely monitored. That area is too fragile and compromised to be able to handle such transportation or handling of the above materials.

Though NET's application states that the company intends to use railways for much of its transportation, the estimated amount of trucking from the site is a serious concern. While two hundred local truck trips per day is half of the total needed if a railway were not implemented, that number is still too high for the area of Eames Street. It would be necessary for all trucks leaving that site to take Route 38 or Route 129 to get to either Interstates 95 or 93. Route 38 and Route 129 are two lane roads that are heavily traveled through both Wilmington and Woburn. The addition of two hundred truck trips per day would not only detrimentally effect local traffic and roads, but also the standard of living for the residents and commuters of both towns.

In 2000, the Wilmington Planning Board approved a site plan for Olin Corporation which planned on the site holding a warehouse that would store and distribute beer and wine. That plan was approved due to the low impact it would have on the area. The current plan needs to be evaluated solely on its own merits and not on the pre-approval from the plan in 2000. In view of the fact that the existing plan presented by NET includes the handling and transportation of questionable materials and the current state of the compromised site, I have the utmost confidence that the Surface Transportation Board will not allow an exemption on this proposal.

I trust that these comments will be considered with all due seriousness and swiftness. I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process and look forward to your positive response. If I may provide any additional information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely yours,


Carol A. Donovan
State Representative

CAD/cb

REPRESENTATIVE CAROL A. DONOVAN